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WATERWAY SHIPPING AND TRANSIT IN SOVIET-POLISH RELATIONS IN 1924–1933

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Abstract. This article examines the nuances of Soviet-Polish relations from 1921 to 1939, focusing on efforts to establish an effective transport and logistics model for border waterways. Although the Riga peace treaty of 18 March 1921, broadly addressed this issue, several political challenges needed to be overcome to fully resolve it, including devising suitable forms for transit trade operations, concluding a trade agreement, and finding a compromise in the Polish-Lithuanian conflict. Optimal export – import operations between the two parties hinged on their willingness to reach bilateral agreements and conventions. The study finds that using border rivers as secondary routes for transporting export goods from the BSSR to Poland and other Western markets was practical primarily for timber supplies. Wood rafting occurred along the rivers Viliya, Iliya, Dvinosa, Western Dvina, Sluch, Moroch, and Neman. Belarusian and allied timber processing organisations (such as “Zapadoles”, “Lesbel”, “Belsplavkontora”, and “Soyuzlesosplav”) sought to maximise the efficiency of these waterways due to their proximity to rich forests. The article highlights that following the Non-aggression treaty on 25 July 1932, and the subsequent warming of Soviet-Polish relations, the issue of water navigation and rafting was addressed by the Convention on the rafting of forest materials along border rivers of 9 June 1933. Before this convention, local agreements between border officials were used to manage the transportation of forest materials along these waterways. Despite the Königsberg convention of 1925 and the organisation of timber rafting to Memel via Latvia along the Western Dvina, the use of Polish commercial intermediaries (such as company “Dawa-Britopol”) did not resolve the issue of rafting wood along the river Neman in 1924–1925. By the early 1930s, as the Neman problem became less relevant due to logistical inefficiencies, Soviet authorities sought alternative routes via the rivers Sluch and Moroch. These routes also faced political obstacles, with the Polish side leveraging economic means to address political issues, including the illegal crossing of the Soviet-Polish border and the subsequent detention of individuals sympathetic to the Soviet regime and Communist party.

Keywords: water navigation and transit; timber; rafting; Soviet-Polish relations; convention.

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ВОПРОС ВОДНОГО СУДОХОДСТВА И ТРАНЗИТА В СОВЕТСКО-ПОЛЬСКИХ ОТНОШЕНИЯХ В 1924–1933 гг.

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Аннотация. Рассматривается специфика советско-польского взаимодействия в 1924–1933 гг. по вопросу создания эффективной транспортно-логистической модели функционирования пограничных водных артерий. Решение данной проблемы, хоть и было в общих чертах оговорено в Рижском мирном договоре от 18 марта 1921 г., требо-

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вало преодоления ряда политических противоречий (определения подходящей формы осуществления транзитных торговых операций, заключения торгового договора, нахождения компромисса в польско-литовском конфликте). Процесс оптимизации экспортно-импортных операций между сторонами напрямую зависел от желания советского и польского руководства находить приемлемые варианты сотрудничества путем заключения двусторонних соглашений и подписания конвенций. Установлено, что использование пограничных рек в качестве второстепенного маршрута транспортировки экспортных товаров из БССР в Польшу и на другие западные рынки сбыта было целесообразным исключительно для поставок лесных материалов. При этом сплав древесины происходил по рекам Вилия, Илия, Двиноса, Западная Двина, Случь, Морочь, Неман. Белорусские и союзные организации по лесопереработке и эксплуатации (“Западолес”, “Лесбел”, “Белсплавконтора”, “Союзлесосплав” и др.) стремились наиболее эффективно задействовать данные водные артерии по причине близости к ним богатейших лесных массивов. Акцентируется внимание, что после заключения Договора о ненападении от 25 июля 1932 г., а также общего потепления советско-польских отношений и их нормализации вопрос водного судоходства и сплава был решен путем подписания 9 июня 1933 г. Конвенции о сплаве лесных материалов по пограничным рекам. До этого момента проблема эффективной транспортировки лесных материалов по пограничным водным артериям решалась при помощи заключения местных соглашений между представителями пограничных корпусов обеих сторон. Утверждается, что, несмотря на подписание Кенигсбергской конвенции 1925 г. и организацию сплава лесных материалов на Мемель через Латвию по Западной Двине, использование посреднических услуг польских коммерческих компаний (“Дава-Бритополь” и др.), вопрос сплава древесины по реке Неман в 1924–1925 гг. так и не был решен положительно. В начале 1930-х гг., когда “неманская проблема” отошла на второй план по причине нерентабельности использования данного логистического маршрута, советское руководство в поиске альтернативного транспортного решения сосредоточило свое внимание на реках Случь и Морочь. При организации сплава по данным водным артериям возникали трудности политического характера. Польская сторона умело использовала рычаг экономического давления для решения отдельных политических задач. Одной из них стал нелегальный переход советско-польской границы с последующим задержанием пограничной охраной лиц, симпатизирующих советской власти и коммунистической партии.

Ключевые слова: водное судоходство и транзит; древесина; сплав; советско-польские отношения; конвенция.

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Introduction

The foundation of Soviet-Polish relations during the interwar period was established through the peace treaty and legal documents signed at the Riga peace conference (September 1920 – March 1921). The practical implementation of these provisions spanned from March 1921 to February 1939. Among the immediate issues was the problem of free navigation and timber rafting, as stipulated in Art. II of the Riga peace treaty. However, it took twelve years to devise an acceptable framework for managing border waterways.

The unresolved Polish-Lithuanian conflict and the reluctance of both sides to compromise on a Soviet-Polish treaty led to economic difficulties, notably the inability to export timber from the BSSR to the west via waterways like the river Neman. This resulted in significant financial losses for the nascent Soviet economy. Temporary local agreements regulating timber transport on rivers such as the Sluch and Western Dvina merely underscored the necessity for a comprehensive bilateral convention.

The general thaw in Soviet-Polish relations following the Non-aggression treaty on 25 July 1932 provided the impetus needed to address border interaction issues. Consequently, on 10 April 1932, the Agreement on legal relations at the state border between the USSR and the Republic of Poland was signed, on behalf of the USSR, by member of the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (PCFA) board B. S. Stomonyakov, and head of the Western department of the PCFA M. Raivid and on behalf of Poland, by representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland W. Rasinsky. Article III of this agreement stipulated that both parties would take measures to protect border markers and prevent the intentional destruction of water structures along border rivers and streams. It also mandated that those responsible for damaging border markers would be prosecuted according to the state parties’ respective laws. To resolve border disputes, mixed commissions comprising border guard officers were to be established. Issues that could not be resolved through these commissions were to be referred for diplomatic resolution.

The Agreement on legal relations at the state border was concluded for five years. On 3 June 1933, the USSR, represented by acting people’s commissar of foreign affairs N. N. Krestinsky, and Poland, represented by Polish ambassador J. Lukasewicz, signed an agreement outlining procedures for investigating and resolving border conflicts. Six days later, the Convention on the rafting of forest materials along border rivers was also signed.

In historiography, the issue of timber rafting and the establishment of trade relations between the BSSR and Poland has not been extensively studied as an independent subject. Initial discussions on the topic can be found in journalistic articles by I. Adamaitis [1] and I. Teumin [2], as well as in annual reviews of the activities of the Office of the authorised people’s commissar of foreign trade (PCFT) of the RSFSR under the

Council of people's commissars of the BSSR[1]. Among Soviet historical studies, P. K. Kravchenko's dissertation is noteworthy[2], although it overlooks some contentious points between the Administration of the authorised PCFT of the RSFSR and the Council of people's commissars of the BSSR. Polish historiography includes studies by M. Leczyk [3; 4] and S. Łopatniuk [5], while contemporary Russian and Belarusian historiography is marked by the works of A. V. Barykin and D. V. Ramanovsky[3].

The scarcity of works directly addressing trade relations between the BSSR and Poland during the interwar period despite a sufficient source base, underscores the relevance of this issue. Interest in economic history has waned in modern historiography compared to a few decades ago, particularly before the 1980s, which also applies to the study of economic relations between the BSSR and Poland.

The purpose of this study is to examine Soviet-Polish relations from 1924 to 1933 concerning water navigation and transit. To achieve this objective, the following tasks must be completed:

- to identify the unprofitability of using wood rafting along the river Neman;
- to investigate the peculiarities of water logistics for timber between the BSSR and Poland from 1924 to 1933;
- to determine the significance of the Convention on the rafting of forest materials along border rivers of 9 June 1933, within the context of Soviet-Polish trade relations during the interwar period.

Research methodology

The study employs special historical methods and adheres to principle of objectivity to examine wood rafting in Soviet-Polish relations from 1924 to 1933. Historical-comparative and historical-typological methods facilitate identifying the periodisation of these relations concerning wood rafting: the period of 1924–1931, characterised by technical and political challenges related to timber transportation along the rivers Neman, Sluch, Moroch; and the period of 1932–1933, when Soviet and Polish leadership favoured signing a bilateral agreement to regulate timber water logistics along border rivers. The historical-genetic method helps to establish causal relationships and patterns in the development of Soviet-Polish trade relations during the interwar period.

Results and discussion

The development of trade and economic relations between the Soviet Union and Poland was significantly impeded by the absence of a pertinent trade agreement. While this factor was influential, it was not the sole cause of the stagnation. The primary obstacle was political discord. During the protracted negotiations of 1923, which were crucial for Poland's trade restoration, the USSR linked the agreement to the cessation of bandit attacks originating from Polish territory. Conversely, when the agreement became vital for the USSR, Poland insisted on payment in gold, as stipulated by the Riga peace treaty [6].

The negotiations eventually led to the establishment of the Polish company "Polrus" in May 1925, which facilitated trade with the USSR. This was followed by an agreement of 20 January 1926 to create the Soviet-Polish trade joint-stock company, which operated until 1934. The USSR primarily exported raw materials, a significant portion of which were destined for Western Europe [3]. Both countries also exchanged delegations of industrialists multiple times.

A particularly critical issue in Soviet-Polish relations from 1924 to 1933 was the transportation of export timber from the BSSR to Poland. Article II of the 1921 Riga peace treaty mandated both parties to ensure free navigation and rafting. However, the strained Polish-Lithuanian relations complicated the utilisation of the river Neman as a viable waterway. The Soviet leadership made numerous attempts to reach a compromise through diplomatic notes and meetings between officials.

Transit on the river Neman required permission from both Polish and Lithuanian authorities. Disputes over the status of the river Neman and the port of Memel further complicated Soviet transit efforts. Great Britain and France advocated for the international status of the Neman and opposed Soviet involvement in negotiations concerning Memel's future. Poland's blockade of the Neman exacerbated regional economic conditions.

The Council of Ambassadors' decision of 13 March 1924 regarding Memel's status did not meet Soviet expectations. Despite attempts to safeguard its interests and Lithuania's sovereign rights, the USSR's efforts proved futile. Subsequent demands for timber passage along the river Neman yielded no results. Neither the Polish-Lithuanian negotiations in September – October 1925 nor the Soviet-Lithuanian meetings in November – December 1925 resolved the issue. In February 1931, Minister of foreign affairs of Lithuania D. Zaunis

[1]The foreign trade of Belarus in 1923–1924 year. An outline of the activities of the Office of the commissariat of the people's commissar of foreign trade under the Council of people's commissars of the BSSR and the state export – import office "Gostorgbel". Minsk, 1925. 74 p. Russian.

[2]*Kravchenko P. K.* Economic and cultural relations of the BSSR with foreign countries (1921–1932). Minsk, 1976. 331 p. (in Russ.).

[3]*Barynkin A. V.* Poland in the foreign policy strategy of Soviet Russia (1918–1919). St.-Petersburg, 2013. 254 p. (in Russ.) ; *Romanovsky D. V.* Foreign economic relations of the BSSR with foreign countries (on the example of the work of "Gostorgbel" in 1922–1931). Minsk, 2003. 137 p. (in Russ.).

informed secretary of the USSR's plenipotentiary representative body in Lithuania M. A. Karski, that the river Neman between Grodno and Druskininkai formed part of the demarcation line, with Lithuania on one side and Poland on the other[4]. Consequently, in the 1930s, Soviet goods were transported through Latvia to Memel in accordance with the 1925 Königsberg railway convention.

In February 1924, the timber exploitation state trust "Zakhodneles", through the USSR's plenipotentiary representative body in Poland, sought permission to transport timber across the Polish-Lithuanian border. Correspondence between the foreign affairs departments revealed that Lithuania permitted free transit from the USSR to Memel, but Warsaw conditioned rafting along the river Neman on improved relations with Lithuania. The PCFA of the USSR communicated to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland that the Polish proposal to divert timber through Danzig and Königsberg, avoiding Lithuanian territory due to the poor state of the Augustow Canal and high freight costs, was unacceptable[5].

In September 1922, commissioner for rafting under the All-Russian Council of National Economy of the RSFSR I. S. Graysbard, noted that almost all timber rafting had ceased. This cessation was due to a lengthy waterway, uncertain rafting conditions exacerbated by wartime disruptions, and the poor condition of the Augustów Canal. Consequently, timber rafting from the resource-rich Neman basin nearly halted[6]. Despite efforts, "Zakhodneles" failed to secure permission from the Polish government, prompting negotiations with private companies for timber rafting along the river Neman. A contract was signed with Memel "Naftal", which also failed to obtain the necessary permits. Protracted negotiations resulted in missing the optimal rafting season.

By mid-July, the state trust of timber exploitation and forestry "Lesbel" engaged in negotiations in Moscow with the company "Dawa-Britopol", which agreed to manage timber rafting and secure all required permits from Polish and Lithuanian authorities. The agreement was finalised on 19 July 1924.

A report by authorised representative of "Lesbel" L. G. Rubo dated 10 December 1924, highlighted various logistical challenges faced by "Lesbel" while exporting timber to Poland. The primary transport routes included waterways (the rivers Neman, Viliya, Iliya, Dvinosa, Sluch, and Moroch) and railways (from station "Negoreloe" to station "Stolbtsy"). Water transport faced issues such as shallow waters, freezing conditions, and political tensions due to the Polish-Lithuanian conflict. Rail transport was complicated by differing track gauges (wide in the USSR and narrow in Poland), necessitating time-consuming transhipment that could degrade timber quality (e. g., blue stain or rot)[7].

As a result, management of "Lesbel" was compelled to enter concession agreements with Polish commercial entities like "Dawa-Britopol" to circumvent many of these transport difficulties, including increased railway tariffs and rafting bans on the river Neman[8]. In January 1925, "Zakhodneles" also transferred rights to raft approximately 50 000 m^3 of timber along the rivers Neman, Dzvinosa, and Ilia to "Dawa-Britopol"[9].

The Procedure for timber rafting along the rivers Dvinosa, Viliya, Iliya, and Neman, developed by the United State Political Administration for the western territory on 14 April 1924, stipulated that navigation along these rivers required coordination with border detachments (Pleschenitsy-11 for the rivers Dvinosa, Viliya, and Iliya, and Koydanovski-13 for the river Neman). Control over rafting operations was to be exercised in specific areas: near the Kalyskovka mill on the river Viliya by two controllers (excluding customs representatives), near the farm "Borovaya" on the river Iliya, and near the farm "Zamarozze" on the river Neman.

The document specified that employees seconded by "Zakhodneles" for rafting purposes in the border zone needed to obtain a corresponding visa from the border guard and register it at checkpoints upon arrival. Raft drivers and caravanners were required to carry appropriate identification, including a card of "Zakhodneles" and a military record book. Given that rafting along the rivers Dvinosa and Viliya occurred directly along the state border between the USSR and Poland, a prior agreement was necessary if rafts needed to touch the Polish shore or use raft twine. The authority to negotiate with Polish representatives was granted to 11 border guards, authorised representatives of "Lesbel" L. G. Rubo and I. A. Kharlanchuk, and the representative of "Dawa Britopol" L. Ryvin[10].

On 20 September 1924, the representative office of the trust "Zakhodneles" in Poland (at the Trade Representative Office of the USSR in Poland) informed the management board of "Lesbel" that permission from the Polish government had been obtained to pass timber along the river Neman, with acceptance at the border crossing point "Sverynava"[11]. However, concerns were raised about the safety of using the river Neman

[4]Foreign Policy Arch. of the Russ. Federation (FPA RF). Fund 010. Inv. 2. Vol. 13. File 202. Sh. 42.
[5]FPA RF. Fund 122. Inv. 7. Vol. 31. File 2. Sh. 125.
[6]Nat. Arch. of the Repub. of Belarus (NARB). Fund 72. Inv. 1. File 102. Sh. 171–173.
[7]NARB. Fund 148. Inv. 1. File 181a. Sh. 56.
[8]Ibid. Sh. 94.
[9]Ibid. Sh. 268.
[10]NARB. Fund 148. Inv. 1. File 191a. Sh. 95.
[11]Ibid. Sh. 211.

as a logistical route. Delays in obtaining permission from Poland led to fears that timber might be stranded over winter, forcing the abandonment of plans to raft timber abroad[12]. Political difficulties were compounded by significant economic changes in the timber market, falling prices rendered the use of the Neman waterway economically inefficient.

Nonetheless, during a meeting between the plenipotentiary representative of the USSR in Poland V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko, and J. Piłsudski in April 1933, the issue of rafting timber along the river Neman was revisited. In a letter from B. S. Stomonyakov dated 4 April 1933, a member of the board of the PCFT of the USSR, to V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko, it was noted that "the Soviet party is interested in the passage of its timber materials along the river Neman; Lithuania has agreed to this, and the delay is solely due to the Polish side"[13].

In the early 1930s, the implementation of timber exports encountered significant challenges. During the 1920s, Soviet economic organisations had freely conducted timber rafting along the rivers Sluch and Moroch. However, in July 1931, the mayor of Luninets informed the Soviet authorities of the cancellation of a local border commission protocol in the Zhytkovichi district, which had established rafting regulations. This decision was justified by citing unresolved border disputes.

After protracted negotiations, Poland formally agreed to permit Soviet rafting. In the spring of 1932, the People's Commissariat of Forestry of the USSR prepared approximately 50 000 m^3 of commercial timber for rafting in this area. Nevertheless, once navigation commenced and the timber was assembled into rafts, Poland issued a ban on the activity[14]. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland linked the lifting of this ban to the extradition of W. Granitski, a Polish citizen detained by Soviet border guards.

On 17 May 1932, B. S. Stomonyakov, a member of the board of the PCFT of the USSR, informed people's commissar for forestry S. S. Lobov about the impracticality of halting timber rafting along the rivers Sluch and Moroch in 1932. Despite not delving into the intricacies of PCFT's negotiations with Poland, S. S. Lobov communicated to J. V. Stalin that they had accepted comrade Stomonyakov's directive for implementation.

To mitigate inevitable losses, the People's Commissariat for Forestry requested that the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist party (bolsheviks) instruct the PCFT to expedite negotiations with Poland to enable both the rafting of that year's timber and the future exploitation of the rich zones in the area[15]. The political bureau of the Central Committee of the party declined to approve a cessation of rafting in the Mozyr region until 1933[16], primarily due to currency issues.

Under the chairmanship of L. M. Kaganovich, a temporary commission of the political bureau on currency reserves developed proposals to reduce currency costs by the end of June. These proposals were approved by the political bureau on 23 June. Consequently, "Exportles" and the PCFT were instructed to increase rafting traffic to Tilsit, Memel, and other north – west trade centres while reducing reliance on Lithuanian, Polish, German, and Finnish railways. This strategy aimed to achieve approximately one-third of foreign exchange savings on timber exports (230 out of 665 thsnd roubles)[17].

On 9 June 1933, the Convention on the rafting of timber materials on border rivers between the USSR and the Republic of Poland was signed by plenipotentiary representative of the USSR in Poland V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko, and Polish foreign minister J. Bek [18]. The convention was ratified by the Central Executive Committee of the USSR on 27 September 1933 and by the Polish government on 5 March 1934. The exchange of ratification instruments took place in Moscow on 5 June 1934.

The provisions of the convention were implemented promptly, as evidenced by the exchange of notes between the plenipotentiary representative of the USSR in Poland and the Polish foreign minister on 19 June 1933. Subsequently, on 9 July 1933, a protocol was signed to the Convention on the rafting of timber materials on border rivers, which was ratified on 27 September 1933. The ratification instruments were exchanged in Moscow on 5 June 1934.

The convention stipulated that timber rafting along the rivers Sluch, Moroch, Viliya, Iliya, Neman, Dvinosa, and Western Dvina would commence from 16 July, pending ratification. All operations were required to occur during daylight hours, with rafts halting overnight. Each rafter or caravanner was mandated to carry an identity card bearing a border guard visa. This card had to display the individual's name, patronymic, surname, age, place of residence, validity period, place of departure and destination, stamp, and, if possible, a photograph. The card was issued by the rafting office or the authority dispatching the timber. Additionally, the dimensions and configuration of the rafts were precisely defined. Each raft had to display a red flag measuring at least 50 cm in length and 30 cm in width, affixed to a four-meter

[12]NARB. Fund 148. Inv. 1. File 191a. Sh. 212.
[13]Letter from a member of the board of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade of the USSR B. S. Stomonyakov to the plenipotentiary representative of the USSR in Poland V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko of 4 April 1933 // Documents and mater. on the history of Soviet-Polish relations. M., 1969. Vol. 6: 1933–1938. P. 35 (in Russ.).
[14]Russ. State Arch. of Socio-Polit. History (RSASPH). Fund 17. Inv. 162. File 11. Sh. 95.
[15]FPA RF. Fund 09. Inv. 7. Vol. 35. File 5. Sh. 163.
[16]RSASPH. Fund 17. Inv. 162. File 11. Sh. 163–164.
[17]RSASPH. Fund 17. Inv. 162. File 12. Sh. 196.
[18]NARB. Fund 152. Inv. 1. File 36. Sh. 8–10.

pole in the middle of the raft unit, along with a board indicating the name of the sending authority and the raft unit number. Lighting equipment had to include a lamp model "Bat"[19].

According to Art. 17 of the Convention on the rafting of timber materials on border rivers between the USSR and the Republic of Poland any issues concerning the regulation of timber launching and rafting, measures for ensuring the smooth passage of raft crews on border rivers, and violations of the convention's articles by either party were to be addressed by supervisors of the border guard detachment within whose territory the rafting was conducted. The mentioned convention of annulled existing local agreements with Poland concerning rafting on specific border rivers and areas[20].

Moreover, Art. 17 provided for the appointment of special authorised persons by both parties to oversee the rafting process at designated border stations. The USSR nominated eight individuals: M. Kazakov (head of the border station "Drysa" on the river Western Dvina, border post No. 0-76), Z. Fishgapt (head of the border station "Sakavichi" on the river Viliya, border posts No. 379–380; 383–384; 388–395), Ya. Fedarau (head of the border station "Krai" on the rivers Viliya, Dvinosa, and Iliya, border posts No. 400–402; 402–403; 412–413; 417–419; 477–488), A. Matavilin (head of the border station "Chyrvonaya Slabodka" on the river Moroch, border posts No. 946–988), M. Paulavets (head of the border station "Starobin" on the rivers Moroch and Sluch, border posts No. 1034–1048; 1048–1063), D. Kudryavtsov (head of the border station "Yurkevichi" on the river Sluch, border posts No. 1063–1137), I. Ruden (head of the border station "Turov" on the river Stvig, border posts No. 1175–1176), F. Azarenka (head of the border station "Bukchy" on the river Stvig, border posts No. 1227–1238)[21].

General oversight was assigned to head of "Belsplaukantora" M. I. Shapira. The Polish authorities, in turn, appointed their representatives: W. Mygrodski (a consultant from the Vilna voivodeship for the border stations along the rivers Western Dvina, Viliya, Dvinosa, and Iliya) and M. Malachynski (a consultant from the Polesye voivodeship for the stations along the rivers Moroch, Sluch, and Stvig)[22]. The conclusion of the Convention on the rafting of timber materials on border rivers positively influenced timber rafting between the Soviet Union and Poland. It addressed all critical procedural issues, established control mechanisms, and defined penalties for violations, thereby significantly facilitating the export of timber from the BSSR to Western markets, including Poland.

Conclusions

Political challenges stemming from the lack of a trade agreement between the USSR and Poland – an agreement stipulated by the Riga peace treaty – along with difficulties in transporting timber via waterways such as the rivers Neman, Sluch, and Moroch, impacted the specifics of export organisation but were not the primary obstacles. Transportation of forest materials by water faced technical problems (delay in unloading timber, rising water, etc.), which led a slowdown in the process and sharply reduced the quality and price of wood. The organisation and execution of timber export operations between the BSSR and Poland in the 1930s were influenced by the overall situation in the European timber market and were directly dependent on the industrial and logistical capabilities of the BSSR. Soviet-Polish relations concerning timber rafting along border waterways from 1924 to 1933 were marked by a lack of regulation and the absence of a bilateral agreement addressing key aspects of waterway timber transport. It was only with the general thaw in Soviet-Polish relations following the Non-aggression treaty of 25 July 1932 that progress was made in resolving border cooperation issues, culminating in the Convention on the rafting of timber materials on border rivers of 9 June 1933.

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